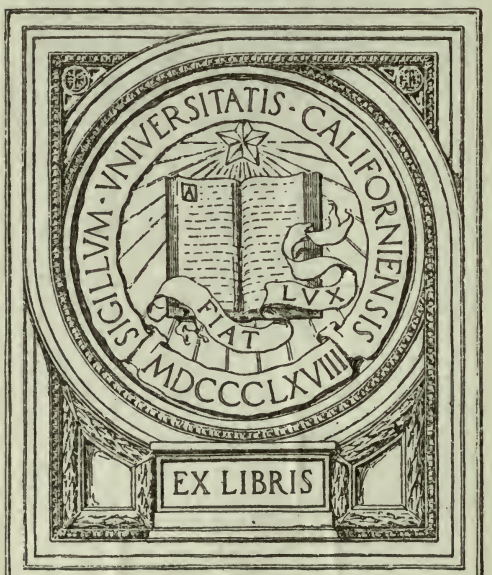

A History of the Philolexian Society of Columbia University from 1802-1902

BY ERNEST A. CARDOZO, '99

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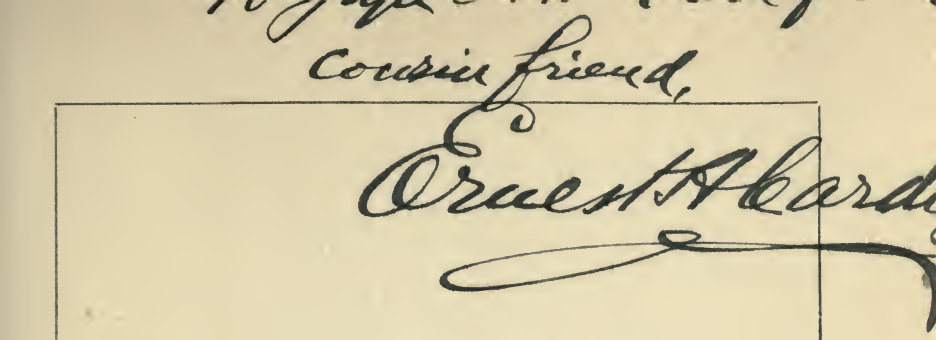

To the Fellow Members

of

Philolexian

As a Loving Tribute to the Memory

of

College Days

This History is Affectionately Dedicated

NOTE.—The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following Philolexian Alumni:

WALTER R. T. JONES, '50

WILLIAM ALLEN JOHNSON, '53

WILLIAM FARRINGTON, '53

J. HOWARD VAN AMRINGE, '60

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I. FOUNDING OF THE SOCIETY.

One of the most interesting incidents in student life at Columbia is a history of the earliest of Columbia's student organizations.

The founding of the Philolexian Society is shrouded in darkness and obscurity. The most we now know of its institution is that it was founded in the year 1802 and has therefore reached at the time of writing the one-hundredth anniversary of its existence. In age it is exceeded by few societies of a similar nature in this country.

The Dialectic and the Philanthropic Literary Societies of the University of North Carolina founded in 1795, and the Philologian and Philotechnian of Williams College, both, curiously enough, also organized in 1795, antedate it by seven years.

That there was, however, a literary society at Columbia College even previous to this date seems unquestionable. In Holt's New York *Journal*, of May 17, 1768, there is an account of the 11th Annual Commencement of Columbia College. In the mention which is made of the exercises on that auspicious occasion it is stated that Benjamin Moore and Gouverneur Morris of the graduating class were awarded silver medals by the "Literary Society" for superior

excellence in oratory and composition. It is likewise well established that prior to the Revolutionary War, Alexander Hamilton graced the membership of the Literary Society which was then in existence, and delivered before it some strong youthful speeches.

In the old College at Forty-ninth Street in the Library Building there formerly hung a certificate of membership in the "Columbia College Society for Progress" of John B. Johnson of the Class of 1792. The President who signed the diploma was John P. Van Ness of the Class of 1789. In 1795 this Society became extinct. From this time on for a couple of years the various classes, it is believed, had each their own literary associations.

In 1801 the Junior Class of the College which had formed one of these literary associations, designated it by the name of Philomathean. One year later, in 1802, this society, membership in which had formerly been limited to members of the Junior Class only, was thrown open to all undergraduates and the name changed to the Philolexian Literary Society of Columbia College.

The Philolexian Society was therefore founded in the spring of 1802, probably on May 17, 1802, by certain members of the Senior Class, prominent among whom are believed to be N. F. Moore, later a President of the College, and Hubert Van Wagenen. The Society seems immediately to have become very popular and its roll included the foremost men in college.

The object in forming Philolexian was presumably the

same as that of the several previous societies in the college—mutual improvement in oratory and composition. In as much, however, as none of these societies had been of any long duration, with the single exception of the Columbia College Society which lasted about eight years from 1787, and as the same students had founded the Philomathean in the previous year and had suffered it to die out, it is not likely that they had any further design or expectation in establishing the Philolexian than to make it a source of improvement and pleasure to them during their own college days.* Various causes, however, combined to make it permanent, the chief of which occurred in 1806.

After the organization of Philolexian each succeeding Freshman class had its Literary Association in order to prepare for the debates in the larger society. These Freshmen societies, it has been surmised, originated in the unusual awe in which the Freshmen held the upper class men and their unwillingness to speak before the members of the higher classes without previous rehearsal. Hence they held weekly meetings for that purpose. At this time they were, however, eligible for membership in Philolexian. Until the vacation in the summer these Freshmen meetings continued.

Finally in the fall of 1803 an imperfect organization was created under the name of the Freshman Society. The members of the incoming classes were admitted to membership in either this society or the Philolexian. This

*Programme, May 17, 1852.

continued to be the situation of affairs until 1806. In this year it was decided to separate the two more distinctly than ever before. Members were allowed to choose in which they would remain, and a nearly equal division having been made, a new society, the Peithologian, was fully organized, and that friendly rivalry commenced to which both societies are probably indebted for their unusually long existence. Great interest was taken in these two societies by the under-graduates and also by the alumni of the College, and that interest has ever since been maintained.

From its foundation to the present time there has been no period in which Philolexian has not been in existence. There have been times in which the society was in a very weak condition but the records of Philolexian establish the undisputed fact that it had a continuous existence during the century that has past.

In the life of a society like this it is manifest that it must have had its ups and downs. There have been times in the history of the society when the deepest depression prevailed, but in every instance the members have proved themselves worthy of Philolexians. The Peithologian owed its organization to the influence of Philolexian members, and when that society had reached its ebb tide it was resuscitated by Philolexians. The Barnard Literary Association organized in 1878 as a protest against the then-prevailing spirit in Philolexian, was given its life by Philolexian members.

When in 1893 the Debating Union was instituted it was due to the suggestion of Philolexian men. In every

onward step that has been taken at Columbia in literary and debating circles it has been the ancient and honorable Society of Philolexian which has always been the leader.

The records of the society, which are surprisingly complete, are filled with interesting matters of every description. They form a most important part of that fascinating section of the Library known as the Columbiana Collection. The old minute books, which form a continuous record since October 10, 1823, teem with much interesting material; the account and receipt books are unique, dating as far back as 1812. The volumes of addresses delivered before the society contain striking examples of oratory; while one or two slim books of anniversary and installation speeches by the Presidents of Philolexian are exceptionally entertaining. The "Philolexian Observer," published by the members of the society and the first student paper of any kind of Columbia, contains many praiseworthy essays and dates as far back as 1812. The records of the society in the Trustees' books show the influence the society once had and the far greater paternalism on the part of the Faculty that formerly obtained. The published constitutions with the by-laws of the society are all-important records and contain much that is valuable; and the reminiscences of the members of the society have been of the greatest assistance in collecting anecdotes and incidents that would otherwise have been wholly forgotten.

It is the purpose of this history to review the occurrences of these one hundred years of the Society's life.

II. MEETING PLACES OF THE SOCIETY.

The many removals of the College have necessitated a change in the meeting places of the society. It is not within the knowledge of the writer where the original meeting or the meetings of the society in its early years were held—probably somewhere in the old "King's College" buildings, situated between what are now Barclay and Murray Streets. Indeed, it is difficult to say exactly where Philolexian was housed for many years. Certain it is, however, that in the year 1821 there was some discussion between the two societies and the Trustees as to the location of their rooms. An extract from the minutes of the Trustees dated July 9, 1821, reads as follows:

RESOLVED, that for the accommodation of the Philolexian and Peithologian Societies, a suitable building be erected; and that the Committee of Repairs report to this Board a plan and estimate, with the site thereof.

RESOLVED, further, that these societies hold the rooms in the same building so long as, in the judgment of the trustees, they shall advance the literary improvement of the students and the general interests of the college, and on the following conditions:

That matriculation in the College, and a correct standing therein, be necessary qualifications for membership in the societies, except in the case of honorary members;

That the right of membership in the societies shall not necessarily terminate with the under-graduate course;

That the presiding officer of each of the societies shall be a graduate member;

That the societies be under the patronage of the Board of the College, who will, by their counsel and support, aid these institutions in the promotion of all their measures for literary improvement of the students and the preservation of the order of the College; it being expected from the societies that they will enjoin on their members a behavior and deportment suitable to their character as students of the College and as members of the societies.*

Apparently the building mentioned in the resolution was never erected, but rooms were assigned to the societies. These conditions imposed by the Trustees, especially the one with reference to having the presiding officer of the society a graduate were a source of much controversy. The discussion on this point seems to have continued for many years. The societies, always more or less displeased with their accommodations, were continually complaining; while the Trustees, on their part were usually, it would seem, ready to listen to the complaints of the students; for the records of the society and the Trustees' minutes show the continuation of this controversy at spasmodic intervals.

In the meeting of March 6, 1826, the Trustees adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, that no society shall be accommodated in the

*Volume III, page 48.

College unless on the condition that every member of the society who shall be expelled or dismissed from the College for misconduct, shall, ipso facto, cease to be a member, and if any member of the society, being a student of the College, shall be suspended by the authority of the College, during such suspension he shall cease to be a member of the society. And such accommodations shall only continue while their course of proceeding in the above particulars and otherwise be approved by the President.

Resolved, that the choice of the two rooms lately prepared for the accommodation of the societies be given to the Philolexian Society, subject to the foregoing regulations.*

The rooms were accepted by the society on these conditions.

On the 9th of October, 1829, there was a joint committee of the two societies appointed to consider with the Trustees the subject of the advisability of the admission of Freshmen into the society. Freshmen had been admitted heretofore, but the Trustees now deemed it necessary that they should no longer be allowed to be members. It had been the settled policy of the Trustees not to have Freshmen members. The societies had yielded most reluctantly to the behests if not the mandates of the Board and on this occasion presented a petition to the Trustees asking for their admission. The joint committee reported to the societies that it recommended that a Committee of Ten be appointed to request the consent of the Trustees of the College to the admission of the Freshmen Class under the restrictions

*Minutes, March 6, 1826.

hereinafter to be made. These restrictions were five in number—and curiously indeed do they read to us of the present day.

(1) The candidate must be fourteen years of age.

(2) He could not be admitted until he had fully matriculated.

(3) He must be proposed by at least three members.

(4) Four-fifths of the members present must vote for his election.

(5) He was ineligible to hold any office in the society.

On this occasion the Trustees in consideration of the above conditions voluntarily proposed, yielded to the wishes of the society. By the records of the Peithologian Society of December 5, 1836, it is stated that the Peithologian Society again complained about the condition of its room.

The Philolexian Society took up the controversy in the following year. On February 6, 1837, we find the following minute: "The Philolexian Society through their committee respectfully represent to the Board of Trustees of Columbia College that the room at present accepted by the society is in a condition alike inconsistent and discreditable. They would therefore solicit from the Board the same aid that has lately been extended to their sister society." This appeal was signed by Russell Trevette, then President of the society, and Messrs. Strong, Chittenden and Knox. It would seem from "a Memorial of the Columbia Peithologian Society to the Honorable Board of Trustees (1839)" that

this aid consisted in changing the room of that society, and it seems likely that the appeal of the Philolexian was also successful.

While this was going on still another agitation seems to have been prevailing. It was to all intents and purposes the most vehement of all the discussions between the students and the Trustees. This latter dispute referred to the oft raised question as to the conditions on which the society held its rooms.

On November 22, 1839, a memorial to the trustees was presented, signed by a committee of five, comprised of John Mason Knox, P. Remsen Strong, Wolcott Gibbs and Robert D. VanVoorhis. Two days thereafter a letter was written to President Duer of the college by John M. Knox on the same subject, dated Monday, November 25, 1839. Among other things, the writer says: "The articles which close the report will, it is confidently expected, meet the approval of the Trustees, and the society respectfully requests the President's influence in their favor. If opportunity should arise in the Board, I must respectfully request the subject to be laid over until the next meeting of the Board, to allow time for conference in the society, and the request will, I trust, if necessary, be acceded to, as the society has manifested a decided willingness to yield partly to the conditions which they do not believe to be at present in force."

The Trustees replied tersely and forcibly. They refused absolutely to accede to the petition. The letter of the

Trustees was written by no less a person than the President of the College, William A. Duer.

In January of the following year, the two societies, Peithologian on January 11, 1840, and the Philolexian five days previous, requested that the key to the societies' rooms be entrusted to the Vice-President of the Society. This request met with as curt a refusal as the other.

The student sentiment on the replies appears to have been so strong that the controversy seems to have waged at least for many years. There is a letter in existence signed by Charles King, President of Columbia College, dated June 4, 1851, addressed to the two societies which shows explicitly the position of the Trustees on the subject at issue:

"The conditions on which the rooms of the Philolexian and Peithologian Societies are held are as follows:

(1) None but matriculated students of good standing in the College to be members, except in the case of honorary members.

(2) Membership not necessarily to cease at the graduation.

(3) The presiding officer of each society shall be a graduate member.

The society to use their room from four to nine P. M. on Fridays, and on Saturdays from 9 A. M. until noon, and at no other times unless by permission of the President.

Any member of the society who shall be expelled and dismissed from the College *ipso facto*, to forfeit his membership

in like manner; suspended by the College, to be for the same time suspended from the society."

The conditions would seem by the minutes of the Board of Trustees to have been communicated to the society. They still exist in full force and are now communicated for the government of the societies, with the additional remark that the decision of the President of the College as to the use of the rooms by the societies is absolute.

(Signed) CHARLES KING,

June 4, 1857. President of Columbia College.

This detailed statement by the President of the College appears to have finally determined this controversy, which had lasted for so many years between student and trustee.

On the one hand, it is not at all surprising that the students wished to relieve themselves from the restrictions imposed, nor is it to be wondered at that the Trustees were just as firm in their decision to maintain the rules of action which they saw fit to adopt. The entire dispute reflects the condition of affairs which prevailed at this time in the college.

"These were the days," wrote William Allen Johnson of the class of 1853 in an entertaining recollection, "when Columbia College was still on its original site on the then narrow Church Street, at the end of Park Place, and the Grammar School under Professor Charles Anthon on Murray Street, close by. The buildings of the College looked well facing on the little green, on which grew some of the most

gigantic buttonwood trees I have ever seen. Near the corner of Church and Murray Streets was a well-known cake shop—Shaddle's—much frequented by lovers of sweets among the students.

In one of the gloomy basement rooms of the College the accomplished Professor James Renwick discoursed on chemistry and natural philosophy, but the boys called it 'Jemmy's Den,' and to the evil influences of the room and atmosphere the most virtuous students succumbed as to their behavior.

It was in two of these basement rooms that the Philolexian and Peithologian Societies held their meetings, the former on Friday evening of each week."

There is an instructive commentary to be gathered from it all. The student with all his accustomed hatred for discipline had fought against any limitation of privilege and had been defeated, as students usually are when their purposes conflict with those of the constituted authority. The Trustees had, however, condescended time and time again to listen to their pleas, and doubtless, if all things were considered, had exercised their power probably for the best interests of all concerned.

It should be remembered that in the fifties the classes were small in numbers, and in the words of another alumnus of Philolexian, upon "the termination of our three-hour lectures the students immediately scattered to widely distributed homes. There were no college athletic facilities to keep them together; and the faculty was so opposed to

favoring athletic exercise that even a delay on the college green was an interference with the regulations. You will therefore see there was very little social intercourse of the students."

Little wonder, indeed, is it that the restrictions were placed upon these two societies. Far greater surprise is it that they were not more burdensome. Yet Philolexian at this time was in a remarkably prosperous state. The literary societies then represented practically the whole of student life. They played a rôle of far greater importance in student activity than at present. There were no athletic or intercollegiate contests to detract the attention of the students; and this was the form of activity in which were centered all the best efforts of the students.

Eventually, however, these restrictions were removed, although the exact date is unknown. It is to be presumed that as the Trustees came to realize that the students were really able and fitted to conduct their own affairs, the restrictions were no longer necessary. This change took place about the time when the college removed to its new home on 49th Street and Madison Avenue, in 1857.

From this date on the society met in many different places. From 1857 at least until the early sixties, the society's abode seems to have been on the top floor of an old ramshackle building formerly used as a paper mill, situated on the southwest corner of Forty-ninth Street. There were no bridges across the railroad tracks then. Potter's Field occupied the land facing the College on the east, and as the

College was very far out of town it was very difficult for the members to attend regularly the exercises of the society. Yet with all these disadvantages Philolexian flourished and its meetings, as is said upon the authority of a most worthy alumnus, were frequently prolonged far into the night while the members were engaged in other than merely intellectual pursuits.

These accommodations do not appear, however, to have been very satisfactory to the members and during the years 1864 to 1870 there were two meeting places of the society. The society was first located on the second floor of a building at No. 8 Union Square in a large Masonic Lodge Room with seats around the sides and numerous cushions around the altar in the centre for the brethren to kneel upon. An organ was a great feature and many an impromptu concert took place and desperate cushion fights between the rival factions occupying opposite sides of the room. The meetings were held on Friday evenings and were called to order at 8 o'clock.

On other occasions the society met in the old Gibson Building over Wallack's Theatre on the corner of Thirteenth Street and Broadway, which has only recently been torn down. It is related that this was a most extraordinary room. A winding stairway led through several stories to a large Masonic Lodge Room under the roof. Here the meetings were held. Various ante-rooms and other appliances were taken advantage of by the members to add effect to the mock initiations which were often made a prominent feature of the society's meetings.

One night, it is said, the members of Philolexian dressed up all the statuary on which they could lay their hands, and which adorned the stairway in all sorts of fancy costumes, and the effect was considered most startling. "I think," writes H. C. Sturges of the Class of 1869, "as a matter of history that our pranks were of such a character that we were driven from all our meeting places."

This is presumably an enthusiastic exaggeration; but if there be any semblance of truth in it the Trustees evidently knew well what they were about when they imposed the restrictions upon the society of which extended mention has been previously made.

The society between these years of 1864 and 1869 had a very vigorous life; the average attendance being about fifty; the level of work was more than fair, and on the whole it has been stated to have been rather high.

From 1870 to 1882 the society held its meetings in Mott Memorial Hall, at 64 Madison Avenue just north of Twenty-seventh Street next to the dwelling of the late Dr. Alexander D. Mott, a place certainly more redolent in learning, but by no means as impressive as the old Masonic Hall. The room in which the exercises of the society were held was filled with anatomical apparatus and medical books, composing the collections and library of Dr. Mott.

At this time, 1873 to 1877, the attendance at the meetings usually did not exceed a dozen, except at the annual prize contests when the attendance increased to twenty-five. The society then met on Thursday evenings.

Mott Memorial Hall continued to be the meeting place of the society until 1892 when, on January 15th, the following resolution was adopted:

"RESOLVED, that the society should hold its meetings every Friday afternoon at 3.30 in one of the College buildings." This was unanimously carried and amidst great rejoicing on March 11, 1892, the first meeting was held in room 22 of Hamilton Hall. This room was the home of the society for five years, until the removal of the University to Morningside Heights. From 1897 Philolexian has held its meetings, first on Friday, then on Wednesday evenings, in room 422 on the fourth floor of Library Building. When, in the present year, Earl Hall was erected, the society changed its place of meeting and now holds forth in one of the rooms in this new home for the students. It ought to be the proud hope of all Philolexian men that some time in the future the old Philolexian Society may have a home of its own.

The college of yesterday and the university of to-day have always contributed to the expenses of the society. The authorities have recognized the worth and have estimated the true value of Philolexian. The college for many years paid the rent of the rooms of the society; and when in return for that generosity, Philolexian donated its library to Columbia, the Trustees decided to give the society the right to expend annually any sum of money to the amount of two hundred dollars. It is to this liberality of the University that the society owes its splendid financial conditions throughout all these years; and it is upon this support that the society chiefly depends; for its dues are very small, and, although it has a bank account of its own, the chief financial aid is properly received from its Alma Mater.

III. CRITICAL PERIODS OF THE SOCIETY.

In this onward march, there have been at least two periods in the life of the Philolexian when its very existence was most seriously threatened. The first one was in the year 1877, when the Barnard Literary Association was formed; and the second was in 1893, when the Hamilton Literary Society was very prominent in literary circles. The latter's existence lasted, however, but a very short time, finally resulting in a consolidation with Philolexian. The simple incontrovertible fact remains, that Philolexian has never disbanded, contrary to certain statements to that effect which have appeared from time to time in the college publications. The very facts speak for themselves, and an investigation of the minutes of the society will disclose the facts as above stated. There has been one continuous life of the society from 1802 to 1902.

The first of these critical periods affords a striking commentary on college life. During the years 1875 to 1877, the society was in rather a haphazard state. There was a considerable degree of freedom and informality in the exercises, and the presiding officers often found it difficult to suppress the disorder and indecorum in which the members were wont to give expression to their vitality.

In these years, also, class politics seemed to have run quite high; and by a sort of combination among the Greek

Letter Societies, an arrangement had been made by which the officers of Philolexian were chosen alternately from some of the Greek Letter Societies, principally the Delta Psi, the Psi Epsilion and the Delta Phi. This plan seems to have been carried out in accordance with an unwritten law—that the presidency should be held in turn, as were likewise two other offices of the society by the leading fraternities, and then by a non-fraternity man or a "neutral."

This confined the membership almost entirely to fraternity men; only enough neutrals being elected to keep up the appearance of its being a general college society. There were no dues, and if there were any fines, they were never collected. The men, however, who were in the society at this time were the foremost men in the college, most agreeable companions, who took very little interest in the society, except from a social point of view. There was no special method of initiation.

When a fraternity man was elected, however, by signing the roll, it was the custom "if he had the price and the inclination for him to blow off as many of the crowd as he liked." In fact, this was a custom rather well established at this time. There are minutes in existence during this period that there were certain inititations in which men were roughed considerably by being blindfolded and asked to jump off the table or being suspended by a rope from the gallery.

It was the result of this state of affairs that induced a

number of Philolexian men, members of the classes of 1878 and 1879 to feel that a change needed to be brought about.

In 1877, when the increase in the number of fraternities in the college and the fact that some of them already represented took very little interest in the society, the men in Philolexian decided that the time was ripe for this change. A sharp fight ensued and a number of men withdrew from the society, and formed the Barnard Literary Society. Most of the members of the Barnard Society had been members of Philolexian, and some of them were very active participants. After their withdrawal from Philolexian, they centered all their energies in Barnard.

But this, strange to say, had a remarkable effect on Philolexian. An effort was immediately made to take in additional members, which was successful, but not to adhere to the rotation in office theory, and in general to improve the personnel and exercises from a literary standpoint. The result was marked. Under the stimulus of the reform movement, which arose in the society, Mr. John B. Pine was elected president and the society was soon established on a firmer basis. There was a little difficulty at first in convincing candidates of the honesty and sincerity of the intentions of the Philolexian men, and also a little difficulty in carrying out the reform plans they proffered, but gradually a general improvement was perceptible and the society took on more of the character of a general college literary society; and as the years rolled on, gained a stronger

hold on the new ideals. It was again firmly started on its upward course.

In perfect truth it may be said that the Barnard Society acted as a stimulus to renewed activity on the part of Philolexian, and largely contributed towards perpetuating the new order of things which began to obtain in Philolexian. At the same time as Barnard may be regarded as the rejuvenator of Philolexian, so it is her offspring. The first president, vice-president and secretary of Barnard were all former members of Philolexian. It should be gratifying to the latter to witness the prosperity and vigor of the younger organization. Philolexian congratulates Barnard and her members, both past and present, upon her success, and wishes her the best of good fortune on the celebration of her twenty-fifth anniversary.

By maintaining the friendship and friendly rivalry between the two societies which has so long been a marked characteristic, a higher standard of excellence and success may be reached by both.

The year 1877 saw the beginning of the decline of the old Peithologian Society. This society continued in existence for some years longer, with varying degrees of fortune. Included in its membership was the present President of the University, Nicholas Murray Butler, who was very active in trying to resuscitate the smouldering embers. The unfortunate dissolution of this old society which occurred a few years later, must always remain a regrettable incident in student literary circles.

When in 1863 the poem entitled "Stella Peithologian" was delivered, there seemed little likelihood that the words then spoken of Peithologian would be as true of Philolexian. Then it was that Philolexian was the master of the situation; but the old saying still holds good, and Philolexian looks upon her lost sister as a precious relic of past memory, always to be fondly cherished.

"For apparently dying, it rose up once more,
With splendor renewed brighter far than before,
Like the Phœnix of Od, from these smouldering ashes,
A glorious vision resplendently flashes.

And poor Philolexians still cherish a hope
At some future day with our members to cope,
And believe in their sun, though 'tis plainly a liar,
Always trying to rise yet ne'er one inch higher.

Philolexia's eyes now tremble with spite
For her poor sun is dimmed by our star's dazzling light.
She has found out at last, though it shines from afar,
Peithologia's orb was always a fixed star.
And a glistening tear down her pallid cheek slips,
For her sun is suffering a solar eclipse.

Philolexians, your pardon, heed not what I say,
Your sun is a very good thing in its way,
But it's well, now and then, that a few wholesome truths
Should be told to such sickly, sun-stricken youths.

And if in this speech aught flattering I've said,
It's not because your own trumpeter's dead.
Oh, no, he comes after; his reason I've heard,
Is that of a woman; he wants the last word."

(Written by Henry Yates Saterlee. Philolexian's orator spoke last. The seal of Philolexian was the sun; of Peithologian, a star.)

This is a noteworthy reflection on the relations of these two old, friendly rival societies, which for so many terms were the very heart and soul of the college students' life and activity. Great pity is it that one has succumbed in the struggle for existence; but all honor to Peithologian, our sister society. A fitting tribute to its life must be reserved for another time and place.

The other danger point in Philolexian's life, to which reference has been made, must be assigned to the recent year of 1893. From 1885 Barnard was in a remarkably prosperous condition; on the other hand, a period of listlessness and inactivity had fallen upon Philolexian. On March 21, 1893, a new literary organization, the Hamilton Literary Association, had been formed. The members of this society, realizing the necessity of assisting the Philolexian Society from its state of decadence, resolved to lend their influence to effect that result, and to consolidate with Philolexian. The minutes of Philolexian speak thus on this occasion:

"This society (The Hamilton Literary Association) was started on March 21, 1893, and has been actively at work for the past two months. Perceiving that the Philolexian was about to die, it made an offer of consolidation for the purpose of preserving the latter, which offer was accepted."

The unselfish example thus set by the members of the Hamilton Literary Association is worthy of the highest praise. They realized that Philolexian must be maintained, no matter what the cost; and the precedent established

by them on that occasion should always be regarded and remembered by future generations, if the time should ever come when the oldest Columbia society needs any aid.

The meeting for consolidation was held on Tuesday afternoon, May 9, 1893, in Hamilton Hall. It was called to order at four o'clock in the afternoon. The members of the Hamilton Society were present at this meeting and, after an address from the President of Philolexian, sixteen men were elected to Philolexian and initiated. The secretary was then instructed to read the minutes of the last regular meeting "of the late Hamilton Literary Society," which were accepted. Thus the critical period was successfully tided over.

From that time on Philolexian's sun has ever been in the ascendant. A new era of hope and success had set in, and the way was opened for the new order of relations and of conditions in society and college life, which was soon to obtain.

IV. ADDRESSES OF THE SOCIETY.

The roll of Philolexian is a most honored one. Since the organization of the society to the present day, the number of members reaches the amazing total of fifteen hundred in one hundred years. The names of many distinguished men were embraced in this, the society's roll of honor; men who in every path of life, as statesmen, scientists, publicists, lawyers and doctors, have proved themselves worthy of the highest merit in their various callings; men who have by their attainments reflected the highest credit on their Alma Mater; men who, as theologians, authors and professors, have gained the world's praise. "The society's claim upon the notice of others," reads an old programme "is found in the great number of its representatives among the prominent men of our city and State. From every station and profession, men look back to the Philolexian Society as to one common point in their early lives—and there is surely some interest due to it when it is interwoven with the recollections of such names as are to be found upon its rolls, and so closely identified with its history."

In the history of this society many interesting ceremonies have occurred. In more ways than one was the influence of Philolexian felt, not only as a factor for good in the College, but even in the life of this large city.

It was the custom of Philolexian to invite prominent

men to speak before the society. These occurrences were made occasions of the highest importance, both socially and intellectually, to the college world and to the world at large. Such customs as these should again be revived by the present generation and made as interesting events as they were in days gone by.

Fortunately some of these addresses are preserved to us. There are two small volumes, if we can give them that name, for they are in reality nothing more than student copy books which contain the inaugural addresses of four of the earlier Presidents of the society. Beautifully written on discolored paper, in the distinct handwriting of Smith Pyne, then the Secretary of the society, afterward its President, these relics of the remote past contain much that is valuable to the society's history. The entire series of addresses are marked by high thought, careful advice and nobleness of spirit, honored treasures of the society.

The first inaugural address which is recorded is that by "H. N. Cruger, Esq., of the Class of 1819 before the Philolexian Society delivered the 5th of January, 1821, on his assuming the office of President." The address is by no means free from advice which is as applicable to the present as it was to the past; the care taken in preparation is easily noticeable and the style, as well as the form, is admirable. The newly-elected President speaks first of his appreciation of the high honor conferred upon him, and after remarking that to the friends of Alma Mater no word of praise about the society is necessary, to others is may be well to add that

"I am convinced that no one has subscribed to the constitution without a full and mature examination of the benefits to be derived from an association organized in the cause of literature and for the sake of mental improvement. The society requires of its members to undergo neither hardship nor privations, nor to make any great sacrifices of their time or convenience. It appoints duties which are at once easy in their preparation and agreeable in their execution. . . . The inducement and reward which it holds out for exertion is more than sufficient to instigate and compensate your most strenuous endeavors. . . . Its appeal is made to self love, the strongest bias and most universal principle of human nature . . . the signal advantages resulting from the discharge of the duties of reading, composing, speaking and debating are too obvious to need a commentary. . . . But in going through this duty (extempore speaking) each member should be on his guard against that spurious and tinsel species of oratory which is but too apt to obtain." Referring to the last anniversary celebration, he writes: "The stand which you took on that occasion in the eyes of the public entails upon you the obligation of perseverance in your efforts." His conclusion, which speaks for itself, consists of a sublime eulogy: "The genius of the present is hovering over us shedding from its wings the kindly and cheering influence of a vivid and unclouded retrospection, and breathing forth an exhilerating voice of harmony that sounds to the ear of hope as the prelude to a glad and prosperous hereafter. Under its

auspices with a steady step and devoted mind be it our best wish to insure the welfare of the society of our adoption and make the name of Philolexian an honor and a boast not only within the precincts of our Alma Mater but throughout the community of which we are denizens."

He was succeeded by William Betts, who delivered his inaugural on March 1, 1822. Differing in tone from his predecessor, he speaks of the internal affairs of the society and offers some words as to the conduct of discussion in the meetings of the society. "Let me exhort you to beware of discoursing without the walls of this society questions which may arise within. It is a habit with some of the members when called upon to speak their sentiments on whatever question may be before the society to apologize for the bad speech which they are about to utter, by saying that they have come unprepared but will however make such remarks as the spur of the occasion may suggest." Well worthy of the critic, he then remarks, "it may appear harsh to say that this is adding arrogance to ignorance . . . above all, gentlemen, be cool and temperate in your discussion. Delicacy and forbearance should rule. . . . Permit me to add to my congratulations on your present prosperity the hope that your indefatigable exertions will long continue to support and deserve both."

There is no further inaugural of which any record has been kept until Friday evening, February 18, 1830, when B. Slosson gave the address. It is an amusing speech, for it refers to habits that obtain not infrequently to-day.

The orator says we are deficient in lateness; our meetings which are scheduled to begin at seven do not commence until eight o'clock. "We are derelict in the performance of our duties and I regret to say it, in gentlemanly deportment, flatly contradicting what is uttered." He complains of the habit of making altogether too many motions—and then, after referring to the existing jealousy which prevailed owing to the prominence of the honorary members, recalls the fact that they love the society just as sincerely as the under-graduate body. There is a ring of truth in the address which speaks more than once for the present as it did to the audience before whom it was delivered.

The last inaugural that is recorded is from the mouth of R. I. Dillon, who succeeded Slosson as President of the society. The address was delivered on March 19, 1830, Slosson having resigned. In a brief address, after a eulogy upon the society, he states that since the credit of the society is that of its members, it is the duty of the latter ever to work for its best interests.

Unfortunately, this custom of having an inaugural either was stopped, or the speeches were no longer taken down.

One other feature of the early years of the society was the addresses made by prominent men before, usually, both the Philolexian and Peithologian Societies. The first address of this character was that by Gulian C. Verplanck, one of the Regents of the University of the State of New York, on the evening preceding the Annual Commencement,

August 2, 1830. The orator of the occasion presented a finished oration. He opens in the following beautiful words:

"It seems to me that in addressing the literary societies formed under the protection of our ancient College amongst her students and graduates for their mutual improvement in the best interest of good learning; meeting them too, upon the eve of that literary anniversary when our Alma Mater is again to send forth a fresh body of her sons from the discipline of education to the cares and struggles of active life, no theme could be more appropriate than the praise of some of those illustrious dead whose memory our country cherishes in grateful affection and whom our college proudly numbers among her eldest and favorite sons."

Those whose praises are mentioned in the masterly oration include Robert Livingston, Gouverneur Morris, Dr. Cooper, Benson, Van Cortlandt, Rutgers and Troup, all honored sons of Columbia. Possibly, the orator's greatest eulogism is reserved for Alexander Hamilton. Of John Jay, whom he refers to as one who lived to be

> "Sent forth of the Omnipotent to run
> The great career of Justice,"

he spoke in measured words of truth. To De Witt Clinton, the first graduate of Columbia after the peace of 1783; the Rt. Rev. Benjamin Moore, President of Columbia College, and Dr. John Bowden, Professor in Moral Philosophy and Logic in Columbia College, the speaker pays his tribute.

It is an address full of those reminiscences that bring pride to Columbia men when they realize how much the nation and the State owe to Columbia's sons.

The societies requested the publication of this memorial address in the following letter to Mr. Verplanck:

August 3, 1830.

Hon. G. C. Verplanck.

Sir:

We have been appointed a committee on the part of the Philolexian and Peithologian Societies to communicate to you the following resolutions passed at a joint meeting of the societies held August 2, 1830, at which Hugh Maxwell, Esq., presided and William Hughes, Esq., acted as secretary.

Resolved, that the thanks of the Philolexian and Peithologian Societies be presented to the Hon. Gulian C. Verplanck for the eloquent and classical address which he has this evening delivered before them.

Resolved, that the Committee of Arrangements inform Mr. Verplanck of the foregoing resolution, and request of him a copy of his address for publication.

We are, Sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servants,

Benjamin Drake,
J. H. Hobert Hawes,
William H. Milnor,
} *Committee.*

The idea of having these addresses given yearly seems to have been well established, but the record of these

speeches is by no means complete. Only about ten of them remain in pamphlet form. In the following year, on May 15, 1831, the anniversary address was given by John W. Francis, M.D., who spoke on Chancellor Robert R. Livingston. In the same year, about two and one-half months later, Edward P. Livingston, Lieutenant-Governor and a Regent of the University of the State of New York, addressed the societies on the broad subject of Oratory. "It will be my object," he said, "briefly to notice some of the rules which have been laid down as guides for the acquirement of the art of oratory." Oratory is the most useful of the arts to " instruct, to please and to effect," is the claim of the speaker.

> "Soft elocution does thy style renown,
> And the sweet accents of the peaceful gown
> Gentle or sharp, according to thy choice,
> To laugh at follies or to lash at vice."

Education, he asserts, is more essential to the orator; study and reflection are its handmates; but for perfection, the gifts of genius are a necessity. The oration is carefully thought out, expressed in clean, concise and at times picturesque language, as worthy of the orator as they are suited to the occasion.

The society celebrated Washington's Birthday, February 22, 1838, by an oration delivered by Rev. Edward G. Higbee, who paid a most fitting and eloquent tribute to the memory of Washington and Hamilton. A deep philosophical discourse was given in which the respective subjects

of Patriotism, Philosophy and Religion are thoughtfully treated as the fundamental pursuits upon which success in life depends.

On May 17, 1840, the anniversary of the society, Benjamin I. Haight, then rector of All Saints' Church was the speaker of the day. The oration is affectionately dedicated to Robert William Harris by his friend and brother, the author. The address is couched in beautiful language; and as the orator draws to his climax, the effect is intensely dramatic. In touching words he recalls the memories of his college life.

"The scenes of college life are reproduced with no ordinary vividness upon memory's tablet . . . Again do I warmly greet my companions and friends . . . Again as I enter our meeting room as the studies and labors of the week are over and prepare to take part in the inspiriting and improving exercises.

Yes! these were happy days, never to be forgotten."

The next oration, which is extant, is one written by William Alexander Duer, on July 24, 1848, the subject being "The Duties and Responsibilities of the Rising Generation." In a spirited address the speaker refers to the approaching war and urges upon all the great necessities for and advantages of public service, although he fully appreciates the great benefits to be derived from a "noble private life." His peroration is a stirring bit of writing. "You will resist with firmness the temptations of prosperity and bear with fortitude the pressure or adversity, sustained

by superhuman strength and cheered by the consciousness of having done your duty to yourselves, your families, your country and your God."

This is the last address of which there is any record.

In the same year, however, a poem was written and read by Thomas P. St. John on the forty-sixth anniversary of the society. The inscription reads:

"To William H. Terry
My brother Philolexian
and friend
The following poem is inscribed
As a slight testimonial of sincere Friendship and Regard."

The author's subject is that of Taste. He thus commences:

"There comes no Muse to aid me in my taste
"Though simple rhyme is all the boon I ask—
Behold the reign of Taste—

And the poet then speaks of the fads of the day, the Rossini play, the opera, a hat from Leary's, "in broided vestry and De Meyers's pants, and tells how the students loiter in 'Classical Broadway.' . . .

But soft—I wake—burst is the magic spell—
The dream departs—'Enchantress, fare thee well.'"

Two other poems were read before the society, the one by Erastus B. Rudd, on February 20, 1861, the subject chosen being "Surgam" the motto of the society; and the

other by Samuel Walden Cooke entitled "Arise," on December 19, 1862.

The former is written in a humorous vein. The poet lamenting the fate of the poor student refers to the burdensome college duties. Especially is this true he believes of the freshman who is forced to seek relief somewhere.

> "Cold comfort this, poor Fresh, what shall he do,
> To aid his fainting soul in dragging through
> These studies that so torture him and vex?
> His guardian angel points to Philolex."

In glowing praise "Her *Sun*, the pride of all Columbia's sons" is appealed to for assistance. The Philolexian poet, fop, beaux and Romeo are all carefully and humorously treated and then seriously the poet adds

> "Brothers, arise, your work is but begun,
> Our emblem is an ever-rising sun."

It is pleasant to recall the following amusing account of Peithologian:

"And jealous Peiths will whisper in your ear—
Peiths, did I say?—I've made a blunder here.
It's far from my intention to make fun of them,
You can't say Peiths unless there's more than one of them.
And there is not—there can't be much variety
In such a very generous society,
Where officers, committee men, majority
And absentees, quorum and minority
All center in one man who sits in state
And gravely listens to his own debate."

It was in this pleasing spirit of jocularity that the speakers or poets of both societies always made fun of the other.

The other poem which has been referred to was written in a more serious tone.

> "In Philolexian's name I come to-day
> To offer at her shrine my humble lay,
> To speak a word of greeting to her friends
> Fair Influence their beauty lends."

And after a loving tribute to the Class of '65 and Philolexian's sons who fought and died in the Civil War, with fond recollections of college joys, college frolics, and college boys, the poet concludes:

> "Arise—our noble motto, rich with precious bustle
> Speaks to the old, the middle-aged, the youth—
> Then, brothers, may we gladly burst the sod
> To find our rest, our happiness in God,
> While through the vaulted arches of the skies
> The Angel's trumpet thunders forth 'Arise!' "

The activity of the society throughout these years is memorable. The poets and orators were all Philolexians, who looked upon these occasions as happy recollections of by-gone pleasures, and were only too glad to be present and assist and join once more in the festivities. It is to be regretted that such customs as these have not continued, but it should be a cause for congratulation not only to feel that they once afforded so much genuine pleasure, but that they may possibly be once again revived.

V. ANNIVERSARIES OF THE SOCIETY.

Closely identified with these auspicious occasions were the anniversaries of the society which were always celebrated with appropriate ceremonies of one kind or another. Sometimes, as we have seen, one address was given by a renowned orator. More often, the members of the society were the participants in the celebration. The records of these anniversaries are not as complete as one would desire. There is a programme in existence of the forty-ninth anniversary of the society, which was held at Tripler Hall, on Monday evening, May 19, 1851. The presidential address was delivered by P. W. Ostrander; while the other orations, of which there were five in number, were as follows:

The Great Republic, E. M. Rodman.

The Age of Peace, G. C. Pennell.

Change *vs.* Progress, J. W. Harper.

Destiny, J. R. Smedberg.

The Search after Truth, its Danger, G. R. Hinton.

Among the musical pieces played on that evening, the Columbia Grand March, written by G. R. Bristow must be mentioned. This piece of music seems to have been very popular, and was always played at Columbia's celebrations of this period.

The semi-centennial celebration of the society was held on Monday evening, May 17, 1852, at Metropolitan Hall. There does not seem to have been anything more

than the usual effort made on this occasion. That it was an unqualified success there is little doubt. The entertainment was opened by five selections of music, including the Columbia Grand March, followed by seven set orations on such true Columbia and Philolexian subjects as "*In tuo Lumine Videbemus Lumen*," by Joseph W. Harper, and "*Surgam*," by James R. Smedberg; William E. Arundel delivered the President's address, while the anniversary oration was by Theodore Sedgwick. On this occasion, a package was sealed and deposited in the archives of the Columbia Library, not to be opened until the one hundredth anniversary.

The invitations for the fifty-first anniversary are rather curious—printed on a small note sheet of white paper, in size three by five inches, with a little flower impressed on a raised surface on the right hand corner. It read as follows:

COLUMBIA COLLEGE, May 3, 1853.

The Philolexian Society will celebrate the Fifty-first Anniversary on Tuesday evening the 17th instant, at Metropolitan Hall; the Exercises to commence at half-past seven o'clock.

The pleasure of your attendance is respectfully requested.

GEORGE C. PENNELL, A.B.,
President.

THOMAS MCCARTY,
EDWARD W. LAIGHT,
DANIEL EMBURY, JR.,
ABRAHAM F. JACKSON,
} *Committee of Arrangements.*

The meeting may best be described by an article which appeared in the New York *Express*, May 18, 1853, and shows how prominent events these anniversaries were in the city's busy life.

REPORTS OF CITY MEETINGS.

Fifty-first Anniversary of the Philolexian Society of Columbia College.

(Reported for the *New York Express*.)

"Metropolitan Hall, in the hey-day of the Lind and the Sontag and Alboni concerts never presented a more brilliant appearance than it did last evening on the occasion of the celebration of the oldest literary society connected with Columbia College. The parquet and the dress circle were full of ladies, attended by their friends of the other sex, and the scene was one of rare attractiveness and animation. Dodworth's band was in attendance, and their performances, at the commencement of every exercise, and at the close of the performances, formed a delightful relief to the more grave proceedings of the evening. They played several different morseaux before the literary exercises commenced, and among them was the 'Philolexian March,' composed for the occasion and dedicated to the society by Mr. Harvey Dodworth—and a very pretty composition it was. This little preliminary concert terminated with Schubert's beautiful 'Serenade,' most feelingly performed. The stringed band played the 'Sounds from Home' in the course of the evening, with much touching sweetness. In fact, this was one

of the most pleasing features of the occasion. Fourteen pieces, bringing in all the various combinations of this accomplished company, were given during the evening and with distinguished applause.

On the platform we noticed Dr. King, President of Columbia College, on the right and left of whom were Mr. George C. Pennell, the newly-elected President of the society, and the poet of this anniversary, Mr. Thomas McCarty, also Profs. Anthon, Turner, Rev. Messrs. Morris (Principal of Trinity School) and Leonard, Garrett D. Van Wagenen, W. V. Brady, Esqs., and others. Just before the first exercise was commenced, Gen. Scott being discovered among the audience, was waited upon by the President of the society to the platform amidst the enthusiastic applause of the auditory.

Including the presidential address of Mr. Pennell (which was very happy) and Mr. McCarty's poem (the subject of which—'Memory'—was very well treated) there were seven literary performances, all of which were of a very high order of composition and were admirably delivered. We were happy to notice a manifest improvement in this last particular since we had occasion before to speak of the Columbia College exhibitions. Where all were so truly creditable, it would be invidious to distinguish and we shall therefore content ourselves with saying that the speakers, other than those we have named, were John A. Kernochan ('*Sic transit gloria mundi*'), Marvin R. Vincent ('The Teacher's Calling'), Herbert B. Turner ('The Influence of Association'—including a beautiful eulogium on woman),

William G. Farrington ('Civilization and Christianity Inseparable'), and Elias G. Drake, Jr. ('Simplicity of True Manhood' including a very eloquent tribute to the character of Washington).

All the addresses were received with great and marked favor, and among the modes of testifying approbation, the profuse bestowment of bouquets, wreaths and coronets, of superb flowers, by the ladies, on their favorites, was certainly the most graceful and appropriate.

Just at the close, a voice from the crowded audience exclaimed 'Three cheers for the Hero of Cherubusco' and they were given 'with a will.' Gen. Scott bowed gracefully in acknowledgment and left the platform amidst the warmest applause."

These anniversaries were probably still maintained by appropriate functions but there is no further mention made of them. From the fiftieth celebration to the one-hundredth anniversary is a very long interval but it can be stated that all the old time fervor, vigor, enthusiasm and interest both of alumni and students still prevail in the society; and the centennial celebration will doubtless be as successful, if not more so, than those in the past.

In recent years it has been the well established custom of the society to hold an annual banquet sometime in the spring. Once a theatre party was successfully given. The same spirit still obtains among its members; and these functions are always the scene of much festivity and productive of genuine enjoyment.

VI. SEMI-ANNUAL EXHIBITIONS AND THE PRIZE FUND.

The next item of interest is seen in a petition presented to the Board of Trustees of the College by the Philolexian Society in the year 1855, requesting permission to elect one of its members to deliver an oration on its behalf at each recurring semi-annual exhibition of the college. To this petition the Trustees returned a favorable answer, making this restriction only, that the orator chosen should be a member of the Senior or Junior Class. This semi-annual exhibition immediately caught the popular fancy. The students showed the greatest interest in it; and, as it was considered a very high honor to be the orator on this occasion, there was considerable rivalry and spirit shown in the competitions. At the first of these exhibitions which took place in 1855, the orator was John Francis Walton. Among his successors as semi-annual orators were, in 1867, George L. Rives, the present Corporation Counsel of New York; in 1878, William Milligan Sloane, the present Seth Low Professor of History, and William Barclay Parsons, Jr., in 1879. These exhibitions were continued certainly as late as 1882. In the *Columbiad* of 1879, an annual publication of the Junior Class, appears this amusing account of the previous year's celebration:

"The semi-annual, thanks to the energy of '79 and

backed by the financial aid of '80 and '82, proved a great success. There was the usual amount of attention paid to the speeches and an unusual amount of flirting in the lobbies. The house was uncomfortably crowded and the sign 'Standing Room Only' was placed outside of the Academy early in the evening."

The interest in the exercises was undoubtedly very great, not only among those in the college but among outsiders as well. The anniversaries were considered events of the greatest social importance. The old Academy was crowded to the doors on these festive occasions. The students in their caps and gowns, the marshals with gay ribbons and batons, all wearing the gold society badges, the brilliant company and fine music, all must have formed a striking picture. Not infrequently, there was added to the exercises a so-called "Mock Programme." This was quite a feature, and the greatest rivalry existed as to which of the persons would get the most bouquets, and the same flowers were sometimes thrown on the stage several times during the evening to keep up the delusion.

The remarkable prosperity of the society is easily realized if we recall that it was at this time that the Prize Fund of the society was also raised. If at no other times during the year the attendance at the meetings of the society was large as the time for the anniversaries, the semi-annuals or the Prize Fund competitions drew near there was always sure to be large numbers of members present. This fact is still true and noticeable to-day.

The Prize Fund owes its creation to the Class of 1853. As a sequel to the semi-centennial, a scheme was drawn up by some of the older members to establish a prize fund of $1,500. In April, 1852, as the records of the society reads, it was resolved "that a plan for the establishment of the society on a firmer foundation and for deriving from the newly-awakened interest of its former members, some lasting and permanent good," be adopted. The suggestion was immediately taken up and carried through with vim and spirit. The actual work of raising the desired amount fell to the class of 1853. The men to whose individual efforts this sum of money was raised, were William Allen Johnson, '53, Abraham S. Jackson, who died last year, and Daniel Embury. Messrs. Hale and Smith also performed valuable service in collecting the sum. The highest praise should be bestowed upon those men who by their earnest, self-sacrificing endeavors gave to Philolexian a fund to establish prizes which has been not only the means of greatest enjoyment among the members, but has served so signally as a factor in perpetuating and making stronger the society. The endowment actually raised was $1,200. The sum thus accumulated was placed at seven per cent. interest; and it is the same rate of interest which the University in its generosity still pays to the society to-day.

As the minutes of the "Scheme of the Philolexian Honorary Prize Fund" states, it was "founded in the Philolexian Society of Columbia College by the Honorary Members of the society, and for which an endowment of

$1,500 was raised, the same having been adopted at a meeting of the Honorary Members held in the College Chapel on the Friday preceding the semi-centennial anniversary of the society, on the 14th day of May, in the year one thousand, eight hundred and fifty-two."

There are three series of prizes awarded annually by the society, competition for which is opened only to the undergraduate members of the society. The Prize Debate for which three prizes are offered takes place at the second regular meeting in April of each year. The competition for the two prizes which are awarded for the best orations delivered takes place on the first meeting in April. There are also two prizes awarded for the best original essays. The fund is entrusted to the care of three persons, to be selected by the society from graduate members, the chairman of the committee having been for many years the beloved Dean of the college, J. Howard Van Amringe, '60.

The complete list of prize-winners since 1855 is recorded in the archives of Philolexian; and it is only in justice to Philolexian to say that the names of the winners present a list of men who have gained the greatest successes in life. From 1855 to the time of writing, the competition has been continued. Such competitions as these should be held in as public a manner as is possible, and such occasions should be made fitting reunions of Philolexian's honored older graduates.

VII. THE INTERNAL CUSTOMS OF THE SOCIETY.

The character of the exercises which the society conducts has, since its institution, changed but little. The meetings have always been held weekly throughout the college term. Philolexian's object has always been to "improve its members in oratory, composition and forensic discussion." This is the end which the society throughout all the years that have past, has kept steadily in view and the goal towards which its members have always labored to reach. The programme has consisted ordinarily of an oration, two or more extempore speeches, an essay and a debate in which sometimes all the members present join. Not infrequently some other form of exercises are presented. Some of the occasional changes presented have been of an interesting character. The society has resolved itself into the United States Senate or the State Legislature and debated the most important topics, political and otherwise, of the day. On other occasions, special orations have been delivered. On still other occasions in these later days, the society has been the vantage ground where subjects for inter-society and inter-college debates have been carefully threshed out.

It was the custom of the society, which was followed until within the last twelve years, to divide the society into "Classes for Literary Duties." The number in each class

varied in proportion to the number of members in the society; but there have been as many as eighteen members in each of the four classes. A different class was assigned for the literary duties every four weeks.

In these recent years this scheme has been abolished, and the assignments are entrusted to the care of an appointment committee which appoints the members to the various duties as it chooses.

In former years it is evident that fiercely contested parliamentary questions have been debated. In one of the old constitutions there are printed a list of the "Decisions of the Standing Committee upon appeals from the Decisions of the President." The subject of some of these decisions are rather quaint and curious. As far back as October, 1832, it is evident that "a gentleman who has left Columbia College and become a student in another institution can continue a member of the society." Possibly with a faint idea of the future modern athletic eligibility controversy it is stated in January, 1833, "that a student attending the lectures of but one professor is eligible to membership." It is evident that at this time parliamentary discussion was a most important feature of the exercise of the society.

There were other interesting special ceremonies of which mention must be made. The constitution of 1820, the earliest constitution of the society which is extant, contains the following provision: "The member who in the opinion of the Board of Officers shall display most eloquence at a

time annually set apart by the President for that purpose, shall be presented with a book or set of books by the President in the name of the society. The said book or books to be purchased at the expense of the society."

At a late date premiums were awarded for excellence in elocution. The premium was a medal of the value of five dollars. A like premium was given to the writer of the best original essay. It was expressly provided that the winner of one premium was ineligible to try a second time.

Still later in the society's history there is recorded in the minutes of December 4, 1884, a generous gift of two hundred and fifty dollars from two alumni, Henry N. Mills, '80, and Robert M. Bull, '80. "They give to the society" so the President announced, "the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars annually for five years to be expended in prizes for the first and second best orations respectively." The competition was open to all active members of the society and the donors imposed only the following restrictions on their gift. First, that there must be at least thirty members in the society; and secondly, that there must be at least three competitors. In this connection it might be proper to add that, when a member of the society, Mr. Mills was one of its foremost speakers. He delivered an oration regularly. In fact, it would seem that it was always the same oration, "Spartacus." The Secretary once records: "Mr. Mills then delivered 'Spartacus' in his best style."

Another interesting custom which was observed was the delivery of a salutatory and a valedictory address. At the

first meeting in every year the salutatory was given by a member, elected the last meeting of the previous year. The valedictory was delivered by a member of the graduating Senior Class on the anniversary of the society, which was always celebrated near the 17th day of May. The date of the anniversary of the society is thus declared: "The anniversary of the society shall be celebrated regularly on the 17th day of May (except that day fall on Sunday or the weather proves unfavorable, in which case it shall be celebrated on the day following) in such manner as the society may order."

The motto of the society has always been the appropriate Latin word "*Surgam.*" This has often been the theme of the society's poets and orators on important occasions.

The seal of Philolexian is likewise an important factor in the society's history. A four-sided square with indentations at the four corners surrounds a circle of half an inch in circumference, in which the rays of the shining sun are impressed. Towards the bottom of the design is the motto "*Surgam,*" with the date of the organization of the society underneath. The badges of the society were made of gold, the general effect of which was strikingly beautiful.

The initiation of the members into the society has been referred to briefly in another connection. There was a regular form of initiation by which the society initiated its members. In 1847 when the time of meeting was on Friday evenings, as early as seven o'clock, the initiate was forced to pay $2.50 and "he may also provide himself with the

gold badge and rosette of the society." The constitution of the society provided that:

"The President shall address him as follows: 'As being received a member of this society, do you solemnly promise faithfully to observe all its laws and regulations, to perform the various duties required of you to the best of your abilities, and to exert your utmost endeavors to promote its interests?'"

To which the member elect shall reply "I do." A copy of the constitution shall then be delivered to him by the secretary, and the following pledge:

"We, the undersigned, students of Columbia College, do, by our signatures, hereunder annexed, voluntarily become members of the Philolexian Society, and as such, do pledge ourselves to adhere to its interest, be faithful to its duties, obedient to its laws, and active in promoting its interest as much as in us lies."

Having been signed by him, the President shall address him as follows:

"You are now regularly admitted a member of the Philolexian and invested with all its privileges." He may also add such other remarks on the duties pertaining to membership and the manner of performing the same as to him shall seem proper.

The Constitution of 1842 declared that the Constitution should be read to the initiate and when signed by him, he was to be presented with the gold badge of the society.

Some of these ceremonial forms have been dispensed

with to-day, but the same general adherence to the old procedure is still happily preserved.

The importance of honorary membership has been noticed elsewhere in these pages. There was a special ceremony in connection with these members and a distinct parchment certificate of honorary membership in the society was presented to the member elect. Upon his election, an honorary member was expected to deliver an address before the society. This request was always complied with. The form of these old certificates, printed in Latin, have been transmitted to us, and are still used by the society in electing its members to honorary membership therein. These certificates read as follows:

SURGAM

SOCIETAS PHILOLECTICA COLLEGII COLUMBIANI.

Neo Eborenses A. D. 1802 *Instituta omnes ad quos hae litteræ præsentes venerint certiores facit.*

(the name was written here)

adolescentem vestuta ac humanitate insignem socium nobis jampridem acritum esse, et sese tam studiis liberalibus deditum quam moribus in geniis ornatum ostendisse; qua ob merita ad socii honorii gradum nunc admitti.

In quonum testimonium, Nos Præses Præsidisque vicarius, sociorum nomine chirographa nostras, sigillumque societatis hisce literis affigenda curavimus.

Præses.
V. Præses.

The annals of the society are full of many mementos of the past. On one occasion, the society ungenerously refused, although probably for some substantial reason, to allow "the New York law students the use of its rooms." On another occasion, however, there was a joint meeting on June 1, 1832, between the Philolexian, the Peithologian and the Literary and Philosophical Society of New York, of which Committee of Arrangements Hamilton Fish of the Class of 1831 was Chairman.

At the anniversary exhibition of May 25, 1830, some unfortunate incident must have occurred, for a resolution and note is recorded "denying the suffered insult to Prof. Renwick" by Barzilli Slosson. The society adopted the following resolution in this connection:

"That this society heartily concurs in the frank disavowal by Mr. Slosson of any the remotest view in injuring the feelings or insulting the character of Professor Renwick for whom they entertain the highest respect as a gentleman and whom they admire for his talents and extensive acquirements."

Copies of this resolution were ordered to be sent to the Trustees, to the Professors and members of the Faculty. In his personal letter to the Professor, Mr. Slosson says that he regrets "that a remark wholly general in its nature should be applied by you in a particular sense was what was not expected." The letter closes with a complete disavowal and the highest praise of the Professor. Presumably the whole trouble was the result of some foolish student prank.

The next incident of this nature occurred in 1849. The fracas on this occasion must have been of a very serious nature; for a two-page letter of the then President of the University, Nathaniel F. Moore, who, strange to say, was a former member and President of Philolexian, is to be found inserted in one of the old books of the society. The president complains bitterly of the "disgraceful scene on the college green"; and warns the society that the entire matter has been placed in the hands of the Trustees. The threat is even made that the society will be forbidden to hold meetings upon the repetition of any similar conduct.

Another record of this sort is recorded at a special meeting held in Dr. Drisler's Lecture Room at 1 P. M. on March 17, 1870, when it was resolved that the chair appoint a committee to write to Dr. Alexander B. Mott, apologizing for the defacing of the busts in the Mott Memorial Library. On that committee were Stuyvesant Fish, Brander Matthews and Robert Arnold. The apology which was offered was accepted.

Still another occurrence of this character is found in the minutes of the society. "It was thereupon moved, seconded and carried that a vote of censure be passed on certain members for creating disturbances in the meeting on November 4, 1885."

In one of the oldest minute books of the society the Secretary has entered the following curious minute: "No meeting, Alas! Alas!" At this time, in 1834, it is evident that the meetings were held with the greatest regularity.

An entertaining anecdote is supplied by a member of the Class of 1871 which he says was handed down from an earlier period. A member of the society had been expelled. One day in passing the rooms where the Philolexians were in session he slipped and fell. Some of the members of the society uncharitably jeered at him. With great hauteur he rose, and, at the top of his voice, answered the jeers of the members by the single word "*resurgam.*"

Another humorous incident which occurred at an earlier date than the above is related by William Allen Johnson, '53. In those days, lamps gave the society its light and in these lamps a very dangerous and explosive article was used, known as burning fluid. One of the members, Charles De Gray Mount, was accustomed to bring forward at each meeting a resolution to put in their places oil lamps or candles. At length this became so monotonous that the resolution was always ruled out of order. One evening, a short time before the semi-centennial anniversary, Mr. Mount rose and said in a most serious voice that he feared our celebration could not be held. "At once all was silence and attention. Mr. Mount continued, without the slightest suspicion of a smile on his face, in a long and obscure preamble and then suddenly said if the lamps should explode and annihilate the society, the anniversary could not be kept. I therefore move that the lamps for burning fluid be removed and oil lamps or candles substituted in their stead."

Some of the old rules found in the constitution and by-laws of the society, are rather suggestive. Upon refusing to leave the room after adjourning or for divulging anything that happened in the meeting a fine of one hundred cents was imposed, or for a second offense, expulsion ensued. For being late there was a fine of six and one-quarter cents, while for absenting oneself from the meeting twenty-five cents was forfeited. If one neglected any duty that was assigned, twenty-five cents must be paid to the treasury as a penalty for the offense. For offering an insult to officers or for addressing the President when the floor was occupied, the fines were respectively fifty and twenty-five cents. If any member committed plagiarism, one dollar was the penalty, and a like amount was forfeited if one refused an election to any office; or leaving the room without permission. In the constitution of 1834 there was also a fine of twenty-five cents for disorderly behavior, or for disorder twelve and one-half cents; but the distinction between these two offenses is not clearly designated.

One of the old rules of the society declared that "No member of the Junior or Senior Class (unless appointed to open the debate) shall be permitted to read off a written discussion."

The method of procedure upon expulsion was also provided for. The accused was heard in his own defense. There was a board elected by the society before which members who had been suspended were cited. If such a member pleaded guilty to the accusation, then the board immediately

reported the matter to the society with its recommendations. If, on the other hand, the plea of not guilty was entered, then a formal prosecution was commenced. The prosecutor appointed by the society opened, after which the accused was allowed to speak in his own behalf. The prosecutor replied and the defendant was then allowed the opportunity of a second hearing. The guilt or innocence of the offender was then determined by the society at large by ballot. The necessity for this procedure seems to have lasted as late as 1852. There are recorded descriptions of the trial of at least one member of the society who was brought before this inquisitorial board. The whole procedure was characterized by the strictest formality and throws a most amusing light on the nature of the proceedings which were carried on in such a serious manner.

At a later period there was in existence an officer designated as the sergeant-at-arms or censor. Not infrequently there were two such officers elected. They were invested with great powers and their mandates were laws. It is even suggested that it was more honor to receive the election of a sergeant-at-arms—certainly it was more fun—than to be chosen President of the society.

Many were the fines imposed in those days; in fact, they often amounted to rather large sums. In the old receipt books of the society there are many charges against the individual members, sometimes they were paid—not infrequently they were not—more often the delinquents were excused.

Closely identified at one time with the sergeant-at-arms

was the critic. At one time these two officers went hand in hand. The critic would offer his suggestion and if any member took umbrage at the critic's remarks, the sergeant-at-arms would step in and end the controversy. But the offices finally were made more distinct. The office of sergeant-at-arms has long since been abolished. The office of critic is still retained however, and the duties connected therewith. It is incumbent upon this officer to criticize in a proper and dignified manner, the speakers, their efforts and the general tone of the meeting. One of the older men in the society usually receives the appointment in order that he may offer to the society the wisdom of experience.

Of the many services which the society has rendered to the members and the university, the library which at one time the society owned must not be overlooked or forgotten. It is exceedingly difficult to discover any precise information in regard to the library of the society. Certain it is, however, that at one time, there was in the possession of the Philolexian a library of about 1,500 to 2,000 books. There is but one catalogue, and that a very early one, of the library which is extant. In this catalogue there are about 1,000 books mentioned, but it is known that this number was largely increased in later years. The books were on all sorts of subjects. History, biography, novels, tales and romances, philosophy, religion—all were represented, while a separate heading was set apart for magazines and miscellaneous books. The library continued for many years, as late as 1852, in the rooms of the society, and was

then turned over and entrusted to the university authorities. The books of the Philolexian library thus given to the university have not since been maintained as a distinct library but have been indiscriminately distributed in the various subjects and fields to which they belong. Now and then, when a book is called for, one is agreeably surprised when he opens it to find the old Philolexian name-plate still on its covers.

Every member of the society was originally "required to contribute towards the library $1.25 or $4.00 in books according to the prices in store." The rules for running the library were very stringent. There was a registrar, a librarian and an assistant librarian elected by the society, and the records of these officers were carefully kept. If a book was not registered the offending member was fined fifty cents. A member was allowed to take from the library one quarto, two octavos or three smaller volumes. A quarto might be kept out three weeks, an octavo two, and a duodesimo but one. For each week in excess of the time that was allowed, a fine of twelve and one-half cents was imposed. The library was certainly a source of enjoyment to the members of the society; and it is gratifying to think that the society had even the smallest share in adding to the now magnificiently equipped library of the University at Morningside.

VIII. PUBLICATIONS OF THE SOCIETY.

One of the most curious and certainly one of the most interesting customs that ever existed in the society was the publication of two old periodicals, *The Philolexian* and *The Philolexian Observer*. Through the generosity of Bishop G. T. Bedell, who probably received the papers from his father, the manuscript was presented to the Philolexian Society by J. Muhlenberg Bailey on January 14, 1884, and is now on the shelves of the Columbia Library, under the designation of "Columbiana." The entire collection is contained in one volume, and consists of one number of *The Philolexian* and twelve other manuscript papers of *The Philolexian Observer*.*

The probable author of these papers, none of which were signed, was Gregory T. Bedell, one of the contestants in the first debate of the Philolexian Society.

"On Friday, February 26, 1813, appeared the first and only number of *The Philolexian*. There seems to have been but a single copy written to be read before the members of the society in meeting and thus certainly assured of a hearing. It was written on a sheet of foolscap in the clear copy-plate hand of our ancestors and covered two pages and

*W. A. Bradley in the Columbia University *Quarterly*, Vol. I, No. 4, Sept., 1899.

a half. In point of style, the anonymous author wrote the heavy balanced periods of his Johnson model, *The Rambler*, which he quotes at the end of the paper in defence of his anonymity." The author opens his paper by calling attention to the condition of the society and announces that he proposes to write to both the enemies and friends of the society. "After mature consideration he (the writer) has been led to the conclusion that a crisis in the affairs of the society has arrived which demands the best exertions of each individual member. A part of his duty he has perhaps with more boldness than discretion attempted to discharge in this manner. Solicitude for the institution would not permit him to be silent." The purpose of the paper is stated as follows: "To solve this pre-eminently interesting question, what might be the future state of the Philolexian Society he will be obliged to confine himself to such deductions as may be drawn from the consideration of the intrinsic worth of its design, the adaptation of its plan to its object—the talents and erudition of its members—and to answer these questions what will probably be its future condition; upon what it will depend for its existence; upon what for respectability; upon what for celebrity. To the consideration of these questions, the Philolexian will principally be confined." Referring to his anonymity, he says that "in accordance with the prerogative of every anonymous writer," he is given a "right of acting and speaking with less restraint even when the writer happens to be known." It is for this noble purpose that the paper is to be presented to the

society; but for reasons that are unrecorded, no second paper was ever prepared.

Yet it is to be presumed that the idea was again taken up, for on Friday, December 10, 1813, began the series of twelve papers of *The Philolexian Observer*. "I am forcibly struck," writes the author, "with the idea that a paper proposing to treat of subjects connected with the society might, if properly conducted, answer the important purpose of advancing the interests and of establishing the reputation of the institution. For these objects *Philolexian* was written, and I am at a loss to discover the motive which could have induced the writer so soon to have discontinued his labors." The object of the little publication is stated to be to promote the interest of the Philolexian constitution and laws of the society; to speak, and criticise if need be, the internal management, to describe the duties of the members and to praise or condemn the manner in which the various duties are carried out by the members; in general, to write on any miscellaneous subject which the author thinks may be of interest to the society. The anonymous writer then refers to himself as one who has been connected with the institution for a number of years and calls himself "Philolecticus." In the next number he informs his readers that he will devise a plan by which he may be communicated with.

Such was the general scheme of this periodical as originally designated by "Philolecticus." In reality, however, the papers became a medium for the efforts of others, the

author reserving the right to edit the letters written to him, to discuss the various questions raised by his contributors, and to criticise their essays.

In the second number of the paper there are two letters, one written by a "Senior Officer," the other by an "Honorary Member," both praising the enterprise. "Philolecticus" responds with cordial thanks for their advice, and then says that he has decided to request the members of the society to write essays for his paper, which will be criticised by the editor, and can then be discussed before the society. By so doing it is his firm belief that much good will be derived by enabling the members to have more practice in writing English compositions, for as the author well says, "Especially among students in any public seminary the duty of composition as it is forced upon them is considered as irksome in the highest degree, and is avoided as much as is possible, sometimes even at the expense of truth, of honor, of even common honesty. But here the duty would be voluntary, and no doubt attended with pleasure." Then follows a discourse on the advantages of reading, with comments by the editor.

The result sought by the editor was evidently agreeable to the members of the society, for the remaining papers are some of them merely reproductions of essays written to "Philolecticus." The subjects vary in interest and in skill of treatment. Essays on such subjects as "Procrastination" and in the last number on "Scandal" are published.

The third number is devoted to the subject of "Literary Societies." Naturally, especial attention is paid to Philolexian. The author praises the former members for their zeal, and the present members for their activity in well-chosen words: "The society owes to these members" (it is written by a member) "every possible return of gratitude. If there are any present who are among the number particularly pointed at, let them feel a satisfaction in the idea that their exertions have not been in vain, that the dangers they underwent, the fatigues and disappointments they endured, can now be most amply repaid, when looking round in the present prosperity of the society they behold the Philolexian Eagle, emerging from the obscurity which surrounded displaying in her bosom the appropriate *Surgam.*" Referring to Peithologian, the author calls upon his readers "to exercise a spirit of rivalry and not to permit a younger society to excel us in this more than in any other respect." The proceedings of the society are next described: "The duties of the society consist principally in the delivery of orations, in reading select passages of English composition, in the composition of essays, under which head may also be classed the duty of criticism, and in extemporaneous discussion on topics of a miscellaneous nature.

Another of the subjects in the series is on "Gentlemanly Behavior." This discussion is suggested by a resolution which referred to the "divulging of what happens in the society." In the seventh, eighth and ninth papers are published various letters from the members of the society. There

is a letter to "Philolecticus" which calls forth the statement that the pages of *The Philolexian Observer* will always be open to every communication which may be proper to present to the society." The inference that one is permitted to gather is that in the opinion of the author this letter was not on a suitable subject for publication. Then follows a letter from "P. I. R." on the subject of a motion made in the society. This letter was not printed until some time afterwards in the eleventh number. Its object was to introduce a regular printed paper into the society, "a plan," which, according to the editor, was altogether "too visionary to be entertained for a moment." "A society like the Philolexian," it is declared, "has no right to bring itself forward in the character of authorship." This was an opportunity lost forever to the society to publish the first student paper at Columbia. The suggestion was afterwards adopted by the Peithologian Society in the publication of the *Academic Recreations*. Yet it must always be conceded that the original idea was first discussed and threshed out by the members of Philolexian.

A letter is also received from "I. I. P." on "Dancing," "which does not appear quite grave enough for a literary society." Notwithstanding this fact, in the next number the essay appears in full. It is an amusing effort, and the author deals with the greatest severity with rakes, fops and prudes, which he implies arise from the act of too much dancing.

The only really humorous paper in the series is the tenth,

which is entitled the "Ghost of the Philolexian." It is signed "Creighton," and the author in common parlance roasts the *Observer* in a dignified jocular manner. "You began to make a punch bowl," he asserts, "but you produced nothing but a tea-cup—and now, Mr. Philolecticus, let me tell you into what a hobble you have brought yourself. You are excluded from the delights of Elysium. Charon declares that you shall not set foot in his boat, for that such a mass of conceit and egotism would most assuredly sink it. Pluto, moreover, says he will provide a complete set of *The Philolexian Observer*, which you shall be compelled to read as the worst punishment of all, and by way of a little recreation he says he will lend you a few numbers of *The Athenæum* of Yale College." In a calm, judicious, temperate tone comes the answer of "Philolecticus": "Keep yourself cool, good Mr. Philolexian, I promise you you shall never be disturbed."

In the brief review of this little manuscript periodical which must always be of interest to the Philolexian members, we see considerable light thrown upon an otherwise obscure period.

Frequently, at intervals in the records of the society, mention is made of *The Observer*. It seems as if the members contributed papers to be read before the society's meetings, but none of the later publications of *The Observer* can be found.

We can recall with pride the student efforts of these early members of the society; and the relations which are thus

exposed between the members on the one hand, and their connection with *The Philolexian Observer* on the other, the condition of the society, and all the amusing circumstances that are recorded, afford infinite enjoyment to the reader as a relic of the by-gone past.

IX. DEBATING IN THE SOCIETY.

The topics of the many debates directly reflect time and time again as one would naturally suppose, the popular feelings of the times. The broadest questions have been discussed on the floor of the society. Extending over one hundred years, almost every conceivable question has been debated. Political questions, it is not surprising, predominate; but morals, religion, philosophy, literature, social, economic and college questions, all have had their day. Some of the debates taken at random from the great range of subjects may prove of interest.

The first debate of the Philolexian Society of which any record has been preserved, occurred on May 17, 1814, on the "Public Celebration of the Twelfth Anniversary of the Philolexian Society," in the Hall of Columbia College, on the question, "Would it be expedient to extend the benefits of a liberal education to the female sex?" There were three speakers:

James S. Rosevelt, Affirmant.
John R. Mason, Opponent.
Gregory T. Bedell, Respondent.

All the merits and demerits of this much discussed question were threshed out by the speakers in carefully prepared

orations. The diction is excellent, the tone lofty and commanding, the material full and complete. There is a ring in the written addresses. The orations are preserved in manuscript form, and are bound in the same volume with the manuscripts of *The Observer*, the papers of the Philolexian of which extended mention has been previously made.

From this time on, although the records are incomplete, debates within the society, at its various meetings, continue. As we look over the list of subjects, we find one timely question that reads as follows: "That the elevated railroad is a greater nuisance than a benefit." On March 4, 1881, there was a discussion on a "Petition for a course in Oratory," which resulted in a resolution being sent to the Trustees signed by the Presidents of the societies then in existence. It was some years before the result desired by the petitioners was effected, but finally the University too realized the necessity of giving a more prominent place to oratory and debating in the curriculum than had heretofore been given. The university has done much for the students in this matter; but there is still much that is desirable to be accomplished. The future, we trust, may have it in store for those who come hereafter.

One of the debates in 1870, was "Resolved, that the Excise Law should be repealed," and was won by the affirmative. This is the same subject practically that was the question for the debate held this year between the Philolexian and Barnard Societies.

Another topic was, "Resolved, that Polygamy among the Mormons should be suppressed by the National Government." Still other interesting subjects were: "That the United States has been dilatory in respect to the Virginius"; "That Athletics are carried to excess in the prominent American Colleges"; "That poetry has a more refining influence than prose"; "That punishment at the whipping post for wife beating, garrotting and minor offences is better than the present method of imprisonment"; "That it is theoretically consistent with morality and right that a widower should marry his wife's sister"; "That the policy of Disræli has ever been beneficial to the English Government"; "That Reciprocity Treaties are opposed to the true interests of our country."

In one of the debates on the question, "Resolved, that the Liberty of the Press should be restricted," it is recorded that the "Police Gazette" was deemed not admissible as evidence. An appeal was taken from the decision of the chair on this ruling, but it was not sustained. Once when the society was transformed into a senate the following bills were introduced: One for the admission of Utah as a State; another for the free coinage of silver; and still a third for the repeal of the Federal Election Law.

These debates, which took place on the floor of the society from the earliest times, still remained the principal features of the latter day meetings. They have been the crux upon which the energies of the members have always chiefly turned. It is from them that the great benefits are mainly

derived; and it is probably due to the appreciation of this fact that their prominence has always been maintained.

It is a rather strange fact, however, that although these debates within the society were the centre of interest, that no debate occurred, so far as the records of the society would indicate, with the rival Peithologian Society until after the formation of Barnard. Whenever the two older societies held joint meetings it was for the purpose of having some prominent speaker address them. It does not seem to have been thought of as desirable to have any joint debate between the two societies.

The first mention of a joint debate did not arise until after Barnard was organized. On Thursday, October 10, 1879, a resolution was adopted which provided for "A conference committee of three to arrange a joint debate with the Peithologian and Barnard Societies." It is with some degree of hesitancy that this is stated as the first inter-society debate of the Philolexian Society, for there is considerable possibility that other debates may have taken place, which through carelessness or oversight were never recorded. Certainly it is the first reference to a debate of this character.

The result of the efforts of this committee was not altogether successful. After considerable negotiation, in which much jockeying by all sides seems to have been indulged in, the Barnard and Peithologian Societies both claimed that the verbal challenge of the Philolexian was altogether too informal. It was thereupon resolved that a

written challenge should be issued to both of the societies; but soon afterwards it was decided to postpone the debate until after the mid-year examinations. The subject was again taken up, however, and finally, a debate between the Barnard and Philolexian Societies was arranged for April 30, 1880. The subject at issue was, "Resolved, that there should be a property qualification for franchise." The negative supported by Barnard proved the victor of this, the first inter-society debate.

The disastrous result of this debate seems to have put a damper on all further attempts for a number of years. Even the winning society, Barnard, also discontinued her inter-society debate with Peithologian, which had been quite a feature. Of the five debates which had been contested between Peithologian and Barnard the latter had won all five. It was not until six years later that the records show that another inter-society debate took place. This was a three-cornered debate, in which each of the three societies had two representatives. The first and second honorable mention were both awarded to Peithologian. The subject of the contest was "Resolved, that England should grant to Ireland the same rights of general self-government that are now enjoyed by Canada." As each society had one representative on the affirmative, and one on the negative, there could be very little society rivalry. It was individual excellence and skill which counted on these debates.

From this time on these three corner affairs were made

prominent college occurrences. They were annual features until 1893, in which year no debating contest was held.

In 1894 debating acquired a new impetus at Columbia. This year may be stated to have inaugurated the present modern theory of debating at the university. After the resuscitation of the Philolexian Society and the consolidation with the shortly-lived Hamilton Literary Society, affairs were placed in a most prosperous condition. Everything was ready for the next move.

At the meeting of Philolexian, May 9, 1893, a challenge was sent to Barnard for a debate to take place before College closed. Barnard declined to accept the challenge. The great onward step, however, was deferred only until a few months later. On December 7, 1893, the following resolution, one of the most important acts in reference to debating ever consummated by Columbia men, was adopted. It was the suggestion of Philolexian men, and due credit for the enterprise must always be given to Philolexian's sons. "We recommend," so reads the resolution, "the formation of the union of the under-graduate debating societies of Columbia College, under the name of the 'Columbia Union,' and that three members from each society be elected each November to constitute a standing executive committee. That this committee shall represent the debating interests of the college and shall arrange all matters with regard to collegiate and intercollegiate debating, subject to the approval of the societies represented." Thus the Debating Union was originated; thus Columbia's name in debate

would no longer be confined to merely the college proper. Her arm was outstretched for intercollegiate glory, and the honor of intercollegiate victories was thus made possible by the new action of the under-graduates of the two societies of the college.

This scheme was soon followed by another important move, the resumption of the policy of inter-society debates. On May 3, 1894, the present series of inter-society debates was inaugurated with a contest on the subject, "That Capital Punishment should be abolished," in which each society had two representatives. The decision of the judges was again in favor of the Barnard Society. The first contest which Philolexian won occurred on November 23, 1894, when Philolexian with the affirmative side finally succeeded in gaining the decision. It was the custom formerly for each society to have two representatives, but since 1894 three representatives from each society have been chosen. Each year witnessed a contest of supremacy in the best two out of three debates. These struggles have always brought out an appreciative and interested audience, and enthusiasm runs high on these occasions. In 1898 the policy of having two or more contests was abandoned, and an annual debate was instituted. This step was caused by the entrance of Columbia into the field of intercollegiate debating. A word more should be said concerning the inter-society contests. Since November, 1894, seventeen debates have taken place, of which Philolexian has herself credited with nine victories; and Barnard is entitled to the

remaining eight. If, however, we add to the above record the contest of April, 1880, which was won by Barnard, the two societies have each the same number of victories to their credit. The importance of the anniversary debate of the present year cannot be overestimated. On the one hand counting all the debates, Philolexian by winning this contest made the number of victories even; and, if the present series only is counted, Philolexian is once more placed in the lead. On these friendly trials between two such old rivals only the best results can be expected, and only the best results, the highest pleasure, and the greatest enjoyment must, and always does, ensue.

The Debating Union, of which brief mention has been made, proved a remarkable success. To its members are entrusted the debating interests of the University. To say that these interests have been well cared for is a statement of the absolute truth. The Union as a body of undergraduate representatives, has accomplished more to place debating in the place which it should occupy in a university's life than any other one factor. Now and then a so-called graduate advisory board is consulted on important questions. In 1897 the Debating Union established a Freshman Society, which was disbanded in 1899 only to be again revived in the year after. The policy of continuing a Freshman Society seems excellent in theory, as it encourages Freshmen to become interested in debating, whereas otherwise no such interest might be aroused. In practice, the scheme has proved successful.

In 1895 an unsuccessful attempt was made to negotiate an intercollegiate debate with Chicago University. Not until 1897 was Columbia represented in an intercollegiate debating contest. On the evening of March 19, 1897, the Harvard Forum was pitted against the Columbia University Debating Union. The debate, which took place at Carnegie Lyceum in this city, was on the subject, "Resolved, that the present method of electing United States Senators is preferable to election by popular vote." Each university was represented by three debaters. The Columbia team was composed of William Boone Gunton, of Barnard, Charles Frederick Wheaton, of Philolexian, and Joseph M. Proskauer, of Philolexian. Columbia successfully sustained the negative of the debate, and was awarded the decision of the judges. The successful outcome of this debate resulted in the arrangement of three debates with the University at Chicago. Two out of the three debates were won by Columbia. In more recent years, Columbia has debated Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania. Twice has she succumbed to the latter; and, in two out of the three contests, to the former. The victory over Cornell in 1901 was the first victory won by a Columbia team against Cornell since the university boat-race of June, 1895. Columbia's representatives on that auspicious occasion were Charles A. Baker, '99, Ernest A. Cardozo, '99, and Bernard M. L. Ernst, '99, all of Philolexian.

The interesting fact to Philolexian men in connection with these intercollegiate debates is the number of Philolexian

men which have gained the much coveted positions on the teams. Since Columbia commenced intercollegiate debating, there have been all told nine debates, in which eleven different men have represented the university. Of this number, eight have been members of the Philolexian Society.

The Philolexian was also the first to have an inter-society debate with an organization not connected with the university. In April, 1898, a debate was arranged between the Twenty-third Street Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association, and in the following April the contest was held in the Association Hall on Madison Avenue and Twenty-third Street. These debates have been marked by the most cordial relations between the two societies; this contest was the forerunner of two others which have taken place in April, 1899, and in March, 1902, respectively. All the three debates have been won by Philolexian. Such debates of this character with outside organizations are to be encouraged, as they render effective assistance in giving the members of the society practice which well enables them in time to become university debaters.

X. CONCLUSION.

Such has been the history of the Philolexian Society of Columbia University.

With love for the old society and in gratitude for its benefits, the purpose of this sketch has been to portray those recollections which should be held most dear by Philolexian men.

The remarkable influence which the societies once had upon student life has been a matter of comment elsewhere in this history. They were the center of student activity and energy. In all probability, to a very large extent, they took the place of fraternities which were not established at Columbia until 1836. In fact, even after that time, the importance of the two old societies cannot be over-estimated. For many years they were controlled by fraternity men with a high degree of success. Included in the rolls of Philolexian are men whose names shall forever be proud possessions of the society. These men were the prominent leaders in those things which tend to produce the pleasures of students in a college career, and which create the memories which are the joys of older recollections. Columbia University of to-day owes much to these two old societies. Few, indeed, are possessed of the knowledge that the light blue and the white, the colors of Alma Mater, are due to the existence of Philolexian and Peithologian.

The former claims the honor of the blue; the latter, of the white. As the two societies were the medium through which student sentiment was expressed, when the time arose for the crystallization of that sentiment to be exhibited to the eyes of the college world, it is not at all astonishing that the students of those days looked to the societies for the selection and choice of college colors. It was when Columbia become renowned for her prowess in athletics that the necessity for the choice of college colors became paramount. The selection was not long delayed. A combination of the light blue of Philolexian and the white of Peithologian was suggested; and the suggestion, meeting with great popularity, the colors were finally adopted as the emblem of the college, to-day the university.

Such an interesting fact as the above only goes to show the important position which the societies held in the minds of the students. Doubtless, this position was gained through those characteristics which have always signalized Philolexian men. The willingness to sacrifice oneself for the good of others, and to work ever for the interests of Philolexian; the sincerity, combined with the innate ability of the members of the society, these and other praiseworthy qualities have not only endeared the names of former members to the society, but have already raised a goal which the present members are ever striving to reach.

Of individuals and of classes, of their influence and personality, it is exceptionally difficult to speak. Individuals come and go; and classes enter and are graduated. The

minutes of the society only show the recorded deeds of its members; but the history of the community bears testimony to the fact that the members of Philolexian have left upon its pages indelible impress.

To those members who have passed from this life, who by their efforts have so largely contributed to present successes, the society lays at their bier its most humble offering. In deep veneration are the names of such men as Nathaniel F. Moore, 1802, David S. Jones, 1806, Benjamin Haight, 1811, Henry Anthon, 1813, Stuyvesant Fish, D. L. M. Peixotto, 1816, held in the highest esteem by the society.

Probably one of the most brilliant speakers and the ablest debater of the sixties was Arthur P. Sturges of the Class of 1864. His brother, Henry C. Sturges, pays the following tribute to his memory:

"Arthur Pemberton Sturges entered college in the fall of 1861 and graduated June, 1864. From the first he was a very active member of Philolexian; and the minutes of the society and the testimony of his contemporaries, all bear witness to his zeal and talent. He was editor of *The Philolexian Observer* and was elected time after time to represent the society as their star speaker. He first obtained public recognition at the anniversary at Irving Hall, December 19, 1862, in his masterly rendering of "Shamus O'Brien," and at subsequent anniversaries he wrote for and delivered before the societies the two poems of "Johnnie McKay" and "Donald Low." Many now living will gladly bear witness to the delight with which they were received. He was a favorite

pupil of George Vanderhoff and a hard student. On graduating he entered the Theological Seminary at Princeton, but died before he could complete his course, greatly beloved by classmates and friends."

To many others, in like measure, the same praise of love and reverence of honor is due. Space alone prevents the eulogy of those whose memory will ever live in the lustre of the Sun towards which they lent their assistance. To those who fought for the cause of right in the noble struggle of the North and the South, to James Benkard, and William Augustus Boyd, both of the Class of '61, with respect, in loving memory for their actions, Philolexian renders honor.

And to those of the present, the same meed of honor is offered. Philolexian thanks all for their services of love and assures them of the appreciation of their efforts of affection. To her statesmen, lawyers, physicians and ministers, to her authors, professors, scientists and jurists, to her honorary members, alumni and friends, her gratitude is freely given. Among the large number are men whom as individuals we delight to honor. High in esteem does the society hold such members as Abram S. Hewitt, '42, Edward Mitchell, '61, Julien T. Davies, '66, Alfred T. Mahan, '68, George L. Rives, '68, William D. Foulke, '69, Willard Bartlett, '69, Brander Matthews, '71, John B. Pine, '77 and William Barclay Parsons, '79. Upon the respected Dean of Columbia College, her close friend and advisor for so many years, Philolexian's praise is bestowed. To those of her representatives who have fought valiantly for her fame,

whether or not a victory was gained, who have labored so earnestly and put forward such honest endeavors for her success, she begs them to accept her most sincere, cordial and heartfelt thanks.

The men of recent years who have so remarkably guided her steps in her onward march, ought never to be forgotten. First and foremost is Joseph M. Proskauer, '96, a coach of recognized ability, a versatile speaker, a skilled debater and able orator, as counsel and friend, a true Columbia man. Philolexian's honor roll would be incomplete if mention were not made of him. To the classes of Columbia College which have contributed so vastly to her membership, which have aided her when aid was most needed, and to the members of those classes, she speaks a word of manifold gratitude. To the men of the Class of '99, by whose unselfish and ever loving assistance Philolexian's fame has been enlarged, to P. E. Brodt, '97, Charles Frederick Wheaton, '97, Charles A. Baker, '99, Bernard M. L. Ernst, '99, Charles H. Tuttle, '99, Melville J. France, 1900, Michael H. Cardozo, Jr., 1901, and Pendleton Dudley, 1902, to one and all of these and the many others, Philolexian in Columbia's name assures that the future will ever cherish their sincere devotion in preserving the ancient traditions of Philolexian.

To those in charge of the society at the present time is left this glorious legacy of the past. With the world they may well be proud of it, for it is a society which has done much good for its members, but is capable of doing far more. Let them always remember its motto "*Surgam*";

let them ever be conscious of the high principles which have been exalted and maintained throughout all these years; and if only they are true to the spirit of Philolexian, then the acme of her glory and fame has not yet been reached; her Sun will shine far more brilliantly in the new century now opening than ever before, as we, who now celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of Philolexian, bid her God speed for another century—forever a beacon of glory to her sons and to their Alma Mater, Columbia, the mother of us all.